



Tom Schultheis / KY3 NEWS

Tire dumps like this one near Bolivar, seen in 2002, may proliferate because Missouri won't have dedicated cleanup funds.

Tire dumpers cause headaches for landowners, pollution for all

11/5/03

The problems may get worse because a state program was dropped.

By: Christine Bielawski , KY3 News

SPRINGFIELD -- Discarded tires are eyesores in neighborhoods and roadsides, are bad for the environment and could be harmful to health. But the Missouri Legislature cut the funding for a program to help dispose of old tires and soon people will be on their own. For Springfieldians, however, there will be one last chance to legally dispose of tires for free.

Stacey Smith is tired of people discarding tires in a creek on his property outside of Springfield. Just this week, someone dumped about two dozen of them.

"I have a daughter," he said. "I try to think about the environment and the creek."

So Smith will haul the tires away, again cleaning up after someone else's laziness, cheapness and lawlessness.

"I'm going to load up my trailer and save up money so I can dispose of them," he said.

Because Smith is out in the county, he will have to pay to have the tires disposed of properly. Springfield, however, is planning a day when its residents can dispose of old tires for free. No location or date has been set but it will be before December. The city council likely will approve funds for it during its meeting next Monday.

"It would be a drop-off site where residents could bring their tires to be taken by volunteers and hauled away," said Brendan Griesemer, principal planner in the Planning and Development Department.

This will be Springfield's last tire free disposal day because the Missouri Department of Natural Resources lost state money for a waste tire fund. The city is disappointed that the

funding wasn't renewed.

"Particularly in light of the West Nile threat, used tires have become quite important," said Barbara Lucks, recycling coordinator and educator for the city. "It's a shame it hasn't been reauthorized."

Lucks says people can pay a tire company to properly dispose of tires. They can also pay to dispose of old tires at the Springfield Landfill, off Missouri 13 in northern Greene County, when it's open, providing the tires are cut up correctly.

"They need to be cut into three pieces," said Lucks. "There's a prescribed manner for doing that. You can cut out the side walls, cut them in a pie shape or slice them in half like a bagel."

Smith hopes people will use those options instead of using his backyard as a dump.

"It wastes my time on weekends and my resources," he said. "I work hard enough not to pay for someone else's problems."